

Tiffany Quinn

Proposed H.B. No. 5793 –An Act Establishing “Safe Haven Day”

Good Morning Co-Chairs Senator Cassano, Representative Jutila; Vice Chairs Senator Gerratana, Representative Alexander; Ranking Members Senator McLachlan, Representative Smith; and esteemed members of the Committee.

I could not believe the news- a child left in a stroller on the train station platform, another thrown off a bridge by his mother. Worse than disbelief were my feelings of inadequacy and heartbreak. These children did not deserve their fate. What could I have done to help? While I wanted to post my cell phone number on every telephone pole (“please don’t throw you baby away- just call me and I will figure something out”), my husband said, “Absolutely not”!

Instead, I was lying awake at night wondering how we could offer a different choice. What would change the outcome when these mothers were at a point that they saw no other end to their story; no other support in their moments of crisis; no other option except to abandon, throw away or kill their children?

As a mother of three children, I cannot imagine this dark place.

As an Emergency Medical Technician, there is nothing worse than responding to the call for a child who needs help. It is infuriating when you arrive on scene with the ambulance to find the harm has come at the hand of an adult. But it is a nightmare that never really goes away when you have to help search the water for the body of the missing child that was thrown from the bridge.

The Safe Haven Law is in effect in every state and we know it works. We feel strongly that it needs to be in the forefront of education, social media and marketing campaigns to continue its effectiveness with each new generation of mothers. Simplicity was the basis of the law- the simpler it is- the easier it is for people to use it and to spread the word.

Safe Haven Day- April 2- will provide an annual outlet for all Safe Haven media campaigns to ensure that we continue our outreach to all communities with important information about the law that can save two lives. The Safe Haven Law offers mothers of infants less than 30 days old in Connecticut the chance to provide their baby with a safe alternative- a far better option than those I had heard in the news. In reality, the Safe Haven Law saves two lives. While initially it saves the life of the infant by offering a safe place for a mother to leave her infant- no questions asked, completely anonymously, no shame and no blame- it can also save the life of the mother from prosecution and potential jail time.

Education campaigns must reach schools, shelters, hospitals, clinics, EMS services, Youth and Family Service bureaus and any other place that distributes information or educates community members. Social media campaigns must be accessible by those that need the information the most- as well as those that can share the information. The Safe Haven Working group is diligently working on a PSA and an updated brochure. We are working with a young lady who wants to share her story. She did not know about the Safe Haven Law, and she is now in the York Correctional Facility for killing her baby. Her message is very strong- you do not have to make the same mistake she made. It is an ongoing, never-ending cycle of reminding people and getting the word out to each new generation of mothers.

Safe Haven Day provides a way every year to remind all communities that there is another option- you can save two lives with the Safe Haven Law.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tiffany Quinn

